

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Etco Specialty Products Inc

Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center

#### MAMTC Innovation Program Drives New Ideas for Generating Revenue at ETCO Specialty Products, Inc.

##### Client Profile:

Founded in 1982, ETCO Specialty Products in Girard, Kansas manufactures specialty fittings primarily for the utilities industry, including the plumbing, telephone, sewer, fiber optics and electric markets. The company designs and manufactures couplers and plugs, as well as performing customized thermoforming, injection molding, urethane casting and plastic engraving. ETCO employs 35 people.

##### Situation:

The only businesses growing in today's tough economy are those focused on inventing innovative ideas for new sources of revenue. That's why Steve Thompson, ETCO President, decided to work with the Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center (MAMTC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, and learn how to bring new ideas to market using Eureka! Jump Start.

##### Solution:

MAMTC led a group of ETCO employees through a training session to teach them how to systematically identify products, processes or services to grow their business. Manufacturing specialty items is ETCO's primary strength, so putting renewed focus on innovation through the Eureka! Jump Start program was second nature to Thompson and his team. The two new products resulting from ETCO's innovation efforts have gained immediate acceptance in the marketplace: a gun carrier assembly and a clear coupler for both the communications industry and for household use. Additionally, the company is now considering manufacturing a new snap-on hose connector. The connector idea was brought to Thompson's attention by the inventor, who found the company's listing in the Innovation Marketplace, an online, nationwide network that connects inventors with investors and manufacturers who can take their ideas to market. Thompson appreciated that MAMTC didn't promise to know everything about their business, but taught them a process that could be used over and over again to produce innovative, revenue-generating ideas.

##### Results:

- \* Retained sales of \$200,000.
- \* Reduced costs by \$5,000.
- \* Retained 2 jobs.
- \* Increased capital spending by \$175,000.

##### Testimonial:

"Between our knowledge and MAMTC's systematic approach to defining, selecting and completing projects, Eureka! Jump Start made a lot of sense to me. With the positive response we've received in the marketplace, I expect a cash-to-cash return on the products we created through the program within

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the next year or so."

Steve Thompson, President